

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 SNM-02

IO-14 OMB-01 TRSE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03

SS-20 ACDA-19 DRC-01 /114 W
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O R 241252Z OCT 73

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 7657

INFO AMEMBASSY RANGOON

DEA HQS

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 16566

E.9. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SNAR, TH

SUBJECT: BUCK PASSING IN BANGKOK

REF: STATE 209030

SUMMARY: POLICE COLONEL PRAMUAN VANIGPHAND, JUMPING ON BANDWAGON OF MOUNTING VITUPERATION AGAINST THE FORMER REGIME, RECENTLY LABELLED FORMER THAI LEADERS FIELD MARSHAL PRAPHAT CHARUSATHIEN AND COLONEL NARONG KITTIKACHORN "THE BIGGEST DRUG TRAFFICKERS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA". WE HAVE NO EVIDENCE OF THEIR INVOLVEMENT IN THE NARCOTICS TRAFFIC. PRAMUAN'S ACCUSATIONS APPEAR DESIGNED TO: CREATE THE IMPRESSION HE WAS RAILROADED AND SHOULD BE RELEASED FROM JAIL.

1. POLICE COLONEL PRAMUAN VANIGVPAND, FORMER HEAD OF THE POLICE NARCOTICS SUPPRESSION OFFICE, ACCUSED FBJMER LEADERS FIELD MARSHAL PRAPHAT CHARUSATHIEN AND COLONEL NARONG KITTIKACHORN OF BEING INVOLVED IN NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING IN AN INTERVIEW PUBLISHED IN THE OCTOBER 23 EDITION OF "THE NATION". PRAMUAN IS PRESENTLY IN JAI SERVING A
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25 YEAR SENTENCE FOR TAKING BRIBES FROM KNOWN NARCOTICS

TRAFFICKERS TO KEEP THEM OR THEIR MINIONS FROM ARREST. ALTHOUGH THE RTG HAD CONCRETE EVIDENCE OF PRAMUAN'S INVOLVEMENT, IT WAS UNWILLING TO MOVE AGAINST HIM AS LONG AS HIS PROTECTOR, FORMER POLICE DIRECTOR-GENERAL PRASERT RUCHIRAWONG, WAS IN POWER. WHEN PRASERT WAS EASED OUT LAST OCTOBER, PRAMUAN WAS EXPOSED. NARONG PERSONALLY PRESENTED THE CASE AGAINST PRAMUAN.

2. THE BANGKOK PRESS IS FULL OF ALLEGED AND REAL ABUSES ATTRIBUTED TO PRAPHAT AND NARONG. SINCE THEY ARE NOT IN A POSITION TO DEFEND THEMSELVES, MANY GROUPS SEE THE CHANCE TO SLING MUD WITHOUT GETTING SOILED. PRAMUAN, IN ADDITION, IS ATTEMPTING TO GAIN SYMPATHY BY CREATING IMPRESSION HE WAS WRONGLY ACCUSED BY THE FORMER GOVERNMENT (HE WAS SENTENCED BY THE PRIME MINISTER UNDER ARTICLE 17 RATHER THAN BY THE COURTS). PRASERT MAY BE FOSTERING THIS PUBLICITY TO TRY TO SPRING PRAMUAN AND TO TRY TO FIND A NEW PLACE FOR THEMSELVES IN THE PRESENT UNSETTLED POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT.

3. WE HAVE NO EVIDENCE THAT LINKS NARONG OR PRAPHAT TO NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING, OR THAT TRAFFICKER LO HSING-HAN WORKED FOR NARONG. PRAMUAN'S DESCRIPTION OF HIS RELATIONSHIPS WITH US NARCOTICS OFFICIALS ALSO DOES NOT FIT WITH THE FACTS. SENTENCED FOR INVOLVEMENT IN NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING, PRAMUAN'S CHARGES AGAINST NARONG AND PRAPHAT ARE SELF-SERVING, PARTICULARLY SINCE THIS MISSION HAS NO EVIDENCE TO SUBSTANTIATE HIS ACCUSATIONS.

4. TO EXTENT POSSIBLE BELIEVE DEPARTMENT SHOULD AVOID COMMENTING PUBLICLY ON PRAMUAN'S ALLEGATION AS INTERNAL MATTER FOR RTG. IF HOWEVER SOME COMMENT BELIEVED REQUIRED, IT SHOULD BE RECALLED THIS EMBASSY SAID SOME MONTHS AGO THAT IT HAD NO EVIDENCE OF NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING BY TOP LEVEL RTG OFFICIALS IN OFFICE AT THAT TIME AND THAT NO EVIDENCE HAS YET APPEARED TO WARRANT A CHANGE IN THIS VIEW.
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